

Bill Pasarell
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Questions for Secretary Leavitt –

Compendia – for the record

Patients in many parts of our country are being denied access to lifesaving therapies because the list of approved compendia in Medicare Part B has fallen into disrepair.

Last Wednesday, CMS posted an announcement on its website about its intention to officially remove the AMA Drug Evaluations Compendium (AMA-DE) from the list of approved compendia.

This move is understandable, because the AMA-DE compendium hasn't been updated since 1996 when it merged with one of the other three approved compendia, USP-DI. But USP-DI has since changed ownership and changed its name to DrugPoints and isn't being recognized by local Medicare carriers. **Therefore, for many years there has only been one functioning compendia, AHFS-DI. One compendium is not nearly enough to make the system function for all patients.**

When CMS announced the removal of AMA-DE last week, the agency stated, "We believe that the deletion of the AMA-DE is necessary to ensure that Medicare contractors and public stakeholders rely on up to date authoritative resources on off-label anticancer chemotherapeutic treatment regimens."

Mr. Secretary, if CMS' goal is to ensure that patients and providers have up to date compendia at their disposal,

doesn't it make sense that CMS should start adding additional, up-to-date compendia so patients can get the access they need right now? These people, especially cancer patients, need the access to these drugs immediately.